

**Torrey Westrom**  
State Representative

District 11A  
Douglas, Grant and Stevens Counties



# Minnesota House of Representatives

July 26, 2011

COMMITTEES: ~~ENERGY, MINING AND FORESTRY DIVISION~~  
WAYS AND MEANS  
CIVIL JUSTICE  
RULES AND LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Comment Deadlines Established Regarding the LightSquared Technical Working Group  
Report, IB Docket No. 11-109

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing to ask the Commission's help to bring forth more technological options for reliable broadband Internet and cell phone coverage in rural communities.

My legislative district, which is located in western Minnesota, almost to North Dakota and South Dakota, would be well served by such a network. The district includes all or parts of Douglas, Grant and Stevens Counties. Its two largest cities are Alexandria (8,600 people) and Morris (5,600 people). The rest of the district lives in small towns of less than 1,200 people, or on one of the many farms in my district.

Parts of my district lacks good telecommunications services, which is a problem for law enforcement, EMS crews and others that must respond swiftly to emergency situations. It limits the types of employers that can start and grow in rural communities along with less internet or cell phone options for residence whom choose to live in these communities. As recent as last Friday, July 22, I this concern was again brought to my attention at the Grant County Fair. Leaders from the community of Herman, MN, stopped and talked to me about their poor internet service and how it was negatively impacting a local implement dealer, insurance company and other businesses. This is a big barrier to economic growth and job creation in rural communities already struggling to entice and maintain employers.

I understand that the Commission is currently reviewing an application by LightSquared to establish a nationwide satellite network that will address this lack of access. This is good news for my district, since the small rural communities I represent are lagging behind urban centers in technology jobs and good cell coverage.

I also understand that LightSquared has offered to voluntarily restrict the spectrum it will be broadcasting in to minimize possible interference with GPS devices that are receiving signals outside their authorized area. This is expected to address 99.95% of any interference issues



caused by GPS receivers that are "squatting" in LightSquared's spectrum. I appreciate this sacrifice by LightSquared and encourage the Commission to move without delay to approve policies that will expand rural access to needed telecommunications services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Torrey Westrom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Rep. Torrey Westrom

651-296-4929

[Rep.torrey.westrom@house.mn](mailto:Rep.torrey.westrom@house.mn)